

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 290

CS 004 498

AUTHOR Heimberger, Mary J.
 TITLE Continued Focus on Families for Cultural Appreciation, Curriculum Planning, and Tutoring in Reading.
 PUB DATE Aug 78
 NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association World Congress on Reading (7th, Hamburg, West Germany, August 1-3, 1978)
 EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; *Parent Teacher Cooperation; Primary Education; *Reading Interests; Reading Programs; *Role Models; Teacher Aides; Volunteers
 IDENTIFIERS *Reading Attitudes; Reading to Others

ABSTRACT

There are a number of ways in which parents can serve as role models in helping children to value reading, including parent-child sharing of culture through family rituals, reading aloud to children or having the children read aloud, tutoring at home and in the schools, using home learning kits for skill development and to provide a carry-over of skills learned in school, and serving as paid or volunteer teacher aides receiving training and becoming vital participants in reading programs in the schools. Parents are often in a good position to discover children's interests and to perceive their emotional reactions toward the reading situation. They should be encouraged to visit and observe school reading programs and to act as volunteers or as resource persons. (1J)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED162290

Dr. Mary J. Heimberger
Wardlaw College of Education
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Roundtable Discussion: Mobilizing Family Forces
for World-Wide Reading Success

World Congress on Reading, Hamburg, West Germany

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary J. Heimberger

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND
USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CONTINUED FOCUS ON FAMILIES FOR CULTURAL APPRECIATION,
CURRICULUM PLANNING, AND TUTORING IN READING

Dr. Betty Horodezky and Dr. Mary Harris have dealt with how parents can prepare for reading success during the child's early years. As the child acquires the experiences and oral language that are prerequisite for formal reading instruction, he or she absorbs from the family settings and the parents vast amounts of information, attitudes, and feelings about their culture.

Cross-cultural studies in reading show that reading itself is valued differently in different cultures. For example, the American culture "values the skills of reading and writing highly indeed. The great majority of the world's research, scholarly articles and theoretical and professional books on the topic of reading comes from the United States" (Downing, 1973, p. 347).

CS004498

The valuation of literacy is passed on to children by their parents. If parents value reading highly, they will instill a high value for reading in their children. The parent is a visible role model for the child.

In a survey by Artley (1975), students majoring in Education were asked what turned them on or off about learning how to read. They responded to the question "Was there someone or something besides your teachers who contributed to your competence and interest in reading?"

Responses showed overwhelmingly that the parents or the family were a major influence. In most cases the students cited parents that read to them as children--in some cases the students recalled that they had read to the parents or other family members.

An interesting parent education program in which parent-child communication and the sharing of culture is emphasized is reported by Gollub (1977). The program originated as a ten week course in which parents were given the homework of doing a series of short activities with one or more of their children on a daily basis to increase family communication. These so-called Family Rituals are imaginative, fun exercises to be done "at a special time and in a special place set apart from daily routines." Each Ritual has three parts: A Warm-up Activity, a Main Activity, and a Feedback Method. A sample Ritual is as follows:

SONG & TITLES

WARMUP:

Think of a song you both know the words to. Instead of singing it, say it together VERY DRAMATICALLY. Really ham it up--like Shakespeare or someone like that.

MAIN ACTIVITY:

Each of you, list 5 songs you like. Write in the names here.

Person 1:

Person 2:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now, imagine that a show is being written about your family. It's the job of you two to think of 10 song titles that could be in a show about your family. They can be funny. They can be the first lines from songs, etc. Do this together and don't criticize each other's ideas.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Pick out your favorite title and see if you can write the first lines of the song Title # _____

first two lines _____

FEEDBACK: How much fun was this? No fun at all 1 2 3 4 5 Heaps/Gobs/
Barrels

How hard was this? tough 1 2 3 4 5 a snap

Write a song title that says how each of you feel about today's ritual:

Young Person's Title _____

Older Person's Title _____

A total of fifty-six Rituals have been developed, many of which emphasize the sharing and appreciation of one's culture. The Rituals have been incorporated into a series of eight booklets that are distributed by the School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Several of the parents involved in this unique program began generating their own Rituals after using the booklets.

Many less structured experiences involving culture are a part of children's upbringing. Storytelling, the passing on of family histories, and preparing for and celebrating special holidays and festivities such as Russian Easter or the Cuban "Fiesta de Los Quince Anos" are examples of how families foster cultural appreciation in their children.

Reading aloud has been cited earlier as an example of a family activity that has great merit. Botel (1978) includes this activity as one of four Critical Experiences that both home and school should provide for children. The other three experiences are: sustained silent reading, composing (both oral and written), and investigating language patterns. Interestingly, these four Critical Experiences are the basis for the new State of Pennsylvania Reading/Language Arts curriculum. Botel suggests that all of these experiences should be stressed daily at every level, in the home environment as well as in the classroom. He feels that good readers (and writers) become so because of a "literate environment": those conditions which provide the child with firsthand experiences with literacy and which are not bound by socioeconomic class or ethnic background.

Although good parents have probably always provided their children with quality home experiences in literacy, there is recent renewed interest in parent tutoring, both at home and in the schools. In the first area--leading the child to reading success by helping at home--Weiser (1974) goes along with Botel in emphasizing the importance (1) of parents as reading models, (2) of reading to children and (3) of providing "experiences and explorations of language" in the home. In addition to these suggestions, A. Wartenberg (1970) suggests that parents should provide a variety of reading materials for children, should suggest appropriate entertainment, and should encourage pets and hobbies.

Pikulski (1974) expands on these informal suggestions for the home, gearing his recommendations to the parents of children with reading problems. Another useful parental resource is a simple manual entitled "Your Child and Reading: How You Can Help," available from the Houghton Mifflin Company.

There are also more formalized, school-sponsored attempts to assist parents in helping their children in the home which are worthy of note. Harrington (1971) set up an adult education program in Hamburg, New York, which featured class sessions centered on reading, to provide helpful hints for skill development, to suggest activities and to refer casually to some published materials available to parents. Her specific program is detailed in her book How to Help Your Child with Reading at Home.

The Los Angeles, California, Unified School District Adult Division has developed lecture-discussion programs and television

courses to help parents with their children's reading. Tutorial reading clinics and handbooks for parents suggesting ideas for home use to accompany the school readers were made available. Seven types of adult courses involving different amounts of time, different levels and different types of reading (developmental or remedial) are described (DeFranco, 1973).

The Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Schools' Title I Parents in Reading Program featured reading books given to parents which were at the appropriate level for their children, along with suggestions for exposing children to spoken and written language in new and interesting ways. Homemade reading games were also made by parents in scheduled workshops. The Reading at Home segment of the program included Home Reading Awards (homemade badges) or prizes from a Treasure Chest of donated materials. Parents were asked to sign certification that their children had read a stated amount of time at home. There was also a lending library of reading games, mainly commercial, for parents to borrow and home learning kits for parents who were unable to attend scheduled school workshops to make their own (Breiling, 1976).

Similar to the home learning kits are "parent training packages"--self-contained, portable instructional systems which parents can use with children at home--as described by Stowitschek and Hofmeister (1975). These packages cover developmental skills areas (for example, Color Recognition) and are developed to provide a carry-over of skills learned in school to the home with parental

assistance. The PEPPER (Parent Education Program to Pep-up Every Reader) sponsored by the Title I program in Springfield, Illinois, (Duncan and Von Behren, 1974) and the Project Homereach program of the Wilksburg, Pennsylvania, Public Schools (Fleming, 1978) also make use of school-prepared learning packets that are taken into the home for use by parents.

An at-home remedial reading program conducted with parent help is described by Fager and Williams (1973). Parent meetings, handbooks giving background on specific reading skills, and suggested activities and ideas for motivation are all features of this program geared to help the child with reading difficulties outside of school. The Parent Education Program (PEP) of the Newark, Delaware, Schools enabled parents to teach survival reading skills such as reading road signs, menus, etc. by conducting workshops in which parents made games for teaching these skills (Cassidy and Vukelich, 1978).

Another remedial strategy, the Assisted Reading Technique in which the child reads aloud and the parent supplies unknown words, is described in a study by Hoskissen, Sherman and Smith (1974). They demonstrated that parents can be quickly trained in Assisted Reading and can help disabled readers. They found that children liked reading better and read more after the Assisted Reading approach was used.

A final exemplary program involving home tutoring by parents is that of the New Haven, Connecticut, Public Schools in which six varied activities for parent involvement are available (Criscuolo, 1974):

1. Parent Reading Courses (all about the reading process and how to aid it at home)
2. Be My Guest Programs (parents visit the school reading program and discuss it with appropriate personnel)
3. Summer Reading Program (parents sign a Pledge of Active Support and encourage their child to enroll in the program, then take the child to the library and hold conferences about books read)
4. Book Bank (parents collect and distribute used books to children)
5. Reading Workshops for Parents ("make and take" reading games and distribution of a parent handbook with readiness suggestions)
6. School Program (parents work as instructional aides and as community tutors outside of school, in both large and small group situations).

To summarize the importance of specific suggestions and programs to prepare parents for home tutoring, Artley recommends that "parents be made 'full-fledged partners in the educational process' through information on the school reading program and suggestions of supplemental home activities" (Breiling, op. cit., p. 187).

As full-fledged partners, parents' involvement in reading tutoring now extends from the home into the classroom. Mom, and sometimes Dad, may be found in school during the regular school day--and not just as an invited spectator!

"Federal and local funds have made parent participation as paid teacher aides possible. A perhaps amazingly 'unrelated' and 'extraordinary' outgrowth of this has been the empirical evidence that many parents are willing to work for schools on a nonpaid basis, particularly in the reading area, and probably because it gives them

an opportunity to learn what is happening . . . they can serve in valuable roles as aides and be very supportive of the program if they are trained and employed properly" (H. Wartenberg, 1970, p. 720).

There are certain pitfalls to be avoided when placing parent aides or volunteers in classrooms. It does not seem advisable to place a parent in his/her child's class if the parent will be there much of the time. Some schools will not even place a parent at the same grade level as his/her own child, because of the problems caused by parents making comparisons. "Most important, parents should not be pulled into a program just for the sake of having parent involvement. If parents are to be effective, there must be some time spent in meaningful preparation" (H. Wartenberg, op. cit., p. 721).

Parent volunteer training programs encompass both national and state levels in the United States. The National Reading Center has developed an extensive program which involves state level workshops for tutor trainers who then go to individual locales to train parent volunteers (Raim, 1973). The following areas are proposed as considerations in tutor training by the National Reading Center:

1. The design and implementation of adequate training programs to prepare tutors for their jobs.
2. Definition of the tutorial program so that it clearly outlines specific goals for children being tutored. This includes providing enough descriptive and/or diagnostic material for the tutor ahead of time so that teaching can be geared to these goals.
3. Provision for adequate supervision for the tutor.
4. Provision for formal evaluation of the child's progress at the end of a definitive time, for feedback as to tutoring efficacy.

5. Provision for a supervisor of the tutorial program.
6. Planning of specific space and materials for tutoring.
(Raim, op. cit.).

Some suggested tasks which parents might undertake in the school's reading program are as follows:

1. Implementation of instruction

- a. Provide practice experiences of many types for individual pupils or groups (flash cards drills, comprehension checks, workbook assignments, etc.).
- b. Provide individual assistance to pupils who need clarification of directions and other types of assistance as they work.
- c. Read to pupils.
- d. Monitor or supervise students engaged in an activity initiated by the teacher.
- e. Assist pupils engaged in independent activities (learning packs, programmed materials, etc.).

2. Assessment of pupil progress

- a. Assist in monitoring test activities.
- b. Render individual assistance to pupils with special needs during testing sessions.
- c. Assist the teacher with the mechanics of scoring.
- d. Record test results.
- e. Compile weaknesses as revealed by errors on tests.
(Paraprofessionals and Reading Committee of the I.R.A., 1973, Special Insert)

Three good sources of information for planning and implementing parent tutoring programs in the schools are "Guidebook for the Volunteer Reading Teacher," a handbook by Lenore Sleisinger, "For the Volunteer Tutor," a handbook compiled for the International Reading Association by Sidney J. Rauch, and "Parents: Active Partners in Education" prepared by Mary Lou Sayler for the National Education Association.

The first two sources concentrate on specifics of the tutor's role, the latter is a comprehensive guide to setting up a parent involvement program in a community or school district.

A few specific examples of good public school programs will now be cited. The Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas, has had its VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools) Program since 1970. Parents can enlist in any one of a number of voluntary tutoring projects, ranging from reading to motor skills (mini-gym) to art enrichment. The very basic purpose behind VIPS is "the improvement of the adult-child ratio so that those who need help receive more individualized instruction" (Massey and Myers, 1975, pp. 57-58).

The Houston program features a solid orientation program. "There is on-site basic training in school policies and procedures, then the development of special interest groups for more specific training" (Massey and Myers, op. cit., p. 59). The entire program is thoroughly explained in the Handbook for Volunteers in Public Schools, available from the Houston Independent School District, 3830 Richmond Avenue, Houston, Texas, USA 77027.

The Spencerport, New York, Central Schools began a parent aide program in 1968 with 25 volunteers. It has expanded in number to 521 volunteers during the 1977-78 school year, during which a total of 30,269 hours of time was volunteered in the program. Parents are recruited through a letter that is sent home via children in all district buildings, plus some are recommended by teachers who know them and highly support their recruitment. There is a week of general

orientation (usually one of the first weeks of school, either mornings or afternoons) after which more specific training is left to the individual teachers to whom the parent aides are assigned. Those aides who work heavily in tutoring reading also attend special workshops coordinated by Title I reading personnel, in which topics such as reading terminology, grouping, methods and materials for reading instruction are covered. There are also workshops for making reading materials and activities.

Not all parents work in an instructional capacity. Some prefer to do non-instructional tasks such as marking papers and recording grades or test results, running dittos and stencils or other clerical duties. A few volunteers do a combination of instructional and non-instructional work. Many also volunteer to be available as School Resource Persons in various areas such as crafts, travel and local history. Some volunteers even babysit in their own homes so that other volunteers can spend their time in the schools!

The Spencerport program has complete support from the Board of Education and the school administration. A full-time Aide Coordinator administers the program. There is a high degree of flexibility and communication among regular school personnel and the volunteers in Spencerport. Many parents have been involved since the program's inception ten years ago; others have been motivated by their participation to go back to college and earn teacher certification (Hefke and Dennis, 1978).

A parent volunteer program in Mount Clemens, Michigan, that began in 1973 has "Reading Moms" assigned to remedial students.

Unlike most other volunteer tutor programs, there is no required training. The Reading Moms "should be ready listeners and trustworthy confidants" to support the students and make them more comfortable about reading. The tutor role is more of an affective one, less related to skill development than in most programs (Scullen and Curd, 1977, p. 498).

The programs described above are but a sampling of the many parent volunteer programs that are proliferating all over the United States. Two other projects worthy of mention in this regard are the School Volunteer Development Project of Dade County, Florida, and PQRST, a newly developed special interest group of the International Reading Association.

The School Volunteer Development Project is a federally funded program which has been developed by the Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida. This program makes available training materials for school volunteers--kits, handbooks, training modules and films. Some of the sample materials are titled "Becoming a School Volunteer," "Assisting in the Classroom," "Building One-to-One Relationships," "Training for Reading Tutors," and "How to Listen to Children." The first four are handbooks and modules, the last is a film. Additional information and order forms for materials are available from the School Volunteer Development Project, 1410 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida, USA 33132.

PQRST is an acronym for Parents for Quality Reading for Students and Teachers. Its purpose is four-fold:

1. To support programming in reading that involves parents in the instructional process.
2. To support national, state and local reading councils in the organization and development of parent affiliates.
3. To involve parents in the development of a legislative support system for reading instruction.
4. To publish a newsletter dealing with parents and reading.

The Michigan Reading Association of IRA is endeavoring to form this new special interest group. Its organizational meeting was held at the International Reading Association Convention in Houston this past May.

It can be seen that there are many programs featuring tutoring and other parental involvement in reading in the public schools. This movement should lead to the natural involvement of parents in planning the school curriculum. Generally parents are informed about the curriculum, but may have little or no say as to what it is comprised of or how it is developed.

However, "parent involvement in curriculum planning in fact seems to be gaining momentum. Parents have begun to play a more instrumental role in determining early childhood curricula" (Goulet, 1975, p. 163). In a study of kindergarten curricula, Goulet found that there was parent agreement in ranking the importance of developmental domains (i.e., physical, social, self-concept, sensory, perceptual, emotional, language, academic) as to their importance in kindergarten. He concludes that "divergent group concerns must be considered" (Goulet, op. cit., p. 167). It remains to be seen whether growing parent involvement and influence in the schools will have impact on the development of new reading curricula.

The education of children should be regarded as a team project of both home and school. As partners in the reading program, "parents are often in a better position to discover children's interests and to perceive children's emotional reactions toward the reading situation. [They] can provide them an abundance of love and encouragement, a great variety of play, creative and constructive experiences, and unlimited opportunity for free reading in good books and magazines." Parents should be encouraged to visit and observe the school's reading program in action, and invited to act as parent volunteers and/or resource persons (Goodman, 1977, p. 918).

REFERENCES

- Artley, A. Sterl. "Good Teachers of Reading--Who Are They?" Reading Teacher, 29 (October 1975), 26-31.
- Botel, Morton. "Making Reading Public." An address to the Rochester Area Reading Council of the International Reading Association, May 1978.
- Breiling, Annette. "Using Parents as Teaching Partners." Reading Teacher, 30 (November 1976), 187-92.
- Cassidy, Jack, and Carol Vukelich. "Survival Reading for Parents and Kids: A Parent Education Program." Reading Teacher, 31 (March 1978), 638-41.
- Criscuolo, Nicholas P. "Parents: Active Partners in the Reading Process." Elementary English, 51 (September 1974), 883-84.
- De Franco, Ellen B. "Parent Education as an Aid to Improving Children's Reading." Adult Leadership, 21 (April 1973), 320-23.
- Downing, John. "Cultural Priorities and the Acquisition of Literacy." International Review of Education, 19 (1973), 345-55.
- Duncan, Linda, and Barbara Von Behren. "Pepper--A Spicy New Program." Reading Teacher, 28 (November 1974), 180-83.
- Fager, Martha, and Leonard Williams. "Wanted: Parents Involved in Remedial Reading Programs." School and Community, 59 (January 1973), 27.
- Fleming, Betty. Reading Resource Teacher in the Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, Public Schools. Interview, May 1978.
- Gollub, Wendy. "Family Communication Rituals to Aid Children's Learning." Language Arts, 54 (September 1977), 655-60.
- Goodman, Shirley. "Parents as Partners in Our Reading Program." Reading Teacher, 30 (May 1977), 918.
- Goulet, John E. "Curriculum Priorities of Teachers and Parents in the Kindergarten Classroom." Reading Improvement, 12 (Fall 1975), 163-67.
- Harrington, Alma. "Teaching Parents to Help at Home," in Smith, Carl B. (Editor), Parents and Reading. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971.

Hefke, Jean, Coordinator of Teacher Aides, and Pat Dennis, Parent Volunteer, Spencerport, New York, Central Schools. Interview, May 1978.

Hoskissen, Kenneth, Thomas Sherman, and Linda Smith. "Assisted Reading and Parent Involvement." Reading Teacher, 27 (October 1974), 710-14.

Massey, Jeanne H., and Jean Davis Myers. "Volunteer Mothers as Tutors in the Classroom." Journal of Research and Development in Education, 8 (Winter 1975), 54-63.

Paraprofessionals and Reading Committee of the International Reading Association. "Paraprofessionals and Reading." Reading Teacher, 27 (December 1973), Special insert after p. 336.

Pikulski, John. "Parents Can Aid Reading Growth." Elementary English, 51 (September 1974), 896-97.

Raim, Joan. "Rolling Out the Welcome Mate to Tutors." Reading Teacher, 26 (April 1973), 696-701.

Rauch, Sidney (Editor). "For the Volunteer Tutor." Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1969.

Sayler, Mary Lou. "Parents: Active Partners in Education." Washington, D.C.: American Association of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Education, National Education Association, 1971.

Scullen, T. and D. Curd. "Reading Moms: A Program that Works." Phi Delta Kappan, 58 (February 1977), 498-99.

Sleisinger, Lenore. "Guidebook for the Volunteer Reading Teacher." New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1965.

Stowitschek, Joseph J., and Alan Hofmeister. "Parent Training Packages." Children Today (March/April 1975), 23-25.

Wartenberg, Arlene. "A Parent-Teacher Speaks." Reading Teacher, 23 (May 1970), 748-50.

Wartenberg, Herbert. "Parents in the Reading Program." Reading Teacher, 23 (May 1970), 717-21.

Weiser, M. H. "Parental Responsibility in the Teaching of Reading." Young Children, 29 (May 1974), 225-30.

N.A. "Your Child and Reading: How You Can Help." Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973.